



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
May 2, 2008  
Quabbin Reservoir, Belchertown, Ma

Meeting Minutes

*Stewardship Councilors in Attendance:* Chair, Dick Cross; Councilors, Christina Crowley, John Natoli, Laura Johnson, Julian Agyeman and Whitney Hatch.

*Public Attendees:* Twenty – John Fellows, Resident of Amherst; Alexandra Dawsen; Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhood; Mike Leonard, Consultant forester and Town of Petersham Tree Warden; Robert Collins, Massachusetts Association for Professional Foresters; Ken Lenz, Massachusetts Wood Bridges Association; Mr. Page; Ray Webber, Friends of Robinson State Park; Ms. Morris, Nature Conservancy; Mr. Dave Gaffney; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; Mr. Bruce Spencer, Forest Hill; Ms. Ellen Moyer; Chris Matora

*DCR Staff in Attendance:* Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Stephanie Cooper, Jeff Daley, Conrad Crawford, Jim DiMaio, Bill Pula, Gary Davis, Suzanne Wilson, Andy Bachman, Marcelle Valentin, and Joe Rotondo.

I. Call To Order ( 1:00 p.m.), Chair Cross

- a. Cross discussed objectives of the council to actively work on projects and initiatives to support the agency as well create a forum to build a conduit for the agency. He mentioned the three bills submitted will greatly support the agency if accepted by the House and Senate. Many constituents and legislatures will be very happy with the agency if we get the budget proposed so DCR can efficiently work on the operations to get proper staff, maintenance, programs and equipment to bring it to higher standards.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Rick Sullivan

- a. Commissioner introduced Bill Pula Regional Director of the Quabbin Reservoir.
  - i. Mr. Pula welcomed all and gave historical overview of the Quabbin Reservoir. Discussed recent memorial of the seven towns that were removed to create the reservoir. Quabbin is the water resources for 45% of residents in Massachusetts. Mentioned the press clippings about pharmaceuticals in the drinking water. Stated that the water has been tested and there are no pharmaceuticals. The biomass plant project started this week which will end in June and will be using wood chips, saving on fuel.
- b. Commissioner Sullivan thanked group for the boat tour on the reservoir and having the opportunity to see the eagle beds.
- c. Gratitude was given to the Stewardship Council and particularly Chair Cross and Councilor Hatch in lobbying the legislature for the DCR budget. Commissioner Sullivan mentioned that we are in pretty good shape in regards to the amendments and will keep us posted on the status, which the Senate was to vote on at 2 pm today.
- d. Discussed the upcoming events. On Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22, the Commissioner had the opportunity and pleasure to welcome Governor Deval Patrick to the Charles River Esplanade to attend DCR's spring kick-off press event. The Governor praised the great strides made by DCR this year and encouraged residents of the Commonwealth to visit, enjoy, and help preserve DCR properties. Mentioned that the Governor announced plans to create a new \$5.8 million park along the Neponset River between Mattapan Square and Hyde Park, a kick off to the Governor's

initiative the Urban Park Legacy program. Also mentioned Park Serve and the kick off the GPP, encouraging all to participate in this event.

- e. Next month presenting a report to the Park Caucus, which has combined information from the Charles River Watershed Association, Friends of the Emerald Necklace who dealt with the issue on the Storm water, presentation of who we are at DCR, including goals and objectives.
- f. Forestry & Fire Control been very busy the last month over 1,200 fires that we have been fighting or providing technical assistance on 2,500 acres across the Commonwealth. Number of actions came about in terms of asking local communities to ban outdoor burning as well being involved with the Federal Government and some red flag events which have some implications on redness on terms of response for both DCR and the Federal Government can move in with.
- g. Out in Worcester last week, met with Eric Seaborn and Jim DiMaio from Forestry for Arbor Day for the planting of 1,000 trees. On May 1<sup>st</sup> at Elms Bank was the Tree City USA event which Eric Seaborn and Jim DiMaio also put together which was the 25th year of this event.
- h. Special note and thanks to Fire Control in recognition to Herman “Butch” Meady from Irving as 1<sup>st</sup> responder to a fire that a neighbor started illegally, he saved the person’s life, heroic action.
- i. Leslie Luchonek vacated position; Regional Planner is now posted and we are moving forward with the hiring process. We also have a brief presentation, which Andy Bachman will present on where we are with the RMP programs.
- j. The mechanical harvesting of the water chestnuts in Fisk pond by Lake Cochituate has begun. The Solar bees are still running and DCR is working closely with Representative David Linsky to continue funding for none herbicide treatment at Fisk pond.
- k. Currently there is testing being done on the sidewalks on the Longfellow Bridge. It is a standard low testing for those sidewalks, which will be done by the end of the weekend. A report will be issued by the outside consultant, SGH, in turn, we at DCR will implement any recommendations if any that comes from that report in terms of repairs or postings for the sidewalks, especially and most importantly if there is an issue on the sidewalks the public will not be allowed to use the bridge during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event. The inspection of sidewalks on the bridge is to ensure the safety of the public.

### III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

#### a. **Policy Committee, *Julian Agyeman***

- i. Nothing to report.

#### b. **Finance Committee, *Councilor Hatch***

- i. Budget Update/Legislative Meeting Update

- i. Update next meeting.

- ii. Councilor Hatch and Chairman Cross went to the legislature and lobbied for the budget. With the assistance of Rosemary Powers they met with two Ways and Means officers and two Environmental chairs. This was to comment on the House side what the budget was that came out just before they had these meetings and with the Senate was to give them a preview on what DCR and the council care about, and what they saw missing in the House legislation that the Administration had submitted to the legislature in House II. This was an analysis done quickly with the assistance of Marianne Fleckner and Rosemary Powers. The Resource Management plan funding to cover the positions we need is confirmed in the House legislation and we do not need an amendment, pretty good shape when it is in the House side.

- iii. Amendments for State Parks and Urban Parks initiatives for additional investments for those out in the field and safety initiatives especially at the pools to add to the budget. Re-permitting was not in budget and amendment to

have this funded, hopefully. Administration proposed that DCR is able to maintain an additional \$2.3 million in retained revenue, which was not in the House legislation but the council decided to hold off on discussion on the retained revenue amendment until we got to the Senate and focus on the other amendments. The meeting with the legislatures was a great opportunity for them to know who the Stewardship Council members are and gives creditability.

**c. Resource Management Planning Committee, *Andy Backman & Jim DiMaio***

**i. RMP Updates, *Andy Backman***

- i.** Andy Backman informed the council that the Resource Management Plan is almost complete and it will come to the council to be adopted. Below is the synopsis of the RMP and power point presentation.

**ii. RMP Statewide Survey Project:**

**Objectives**

- Compile readily available digital data and summarize by DCR property, planning unit, District and Region.
- Identify common system-wide issues related to stewardship of resources on DCR properties.
- Serve as a guide for prioritizing future DCR planning efforts.

**Progress to Date**

- Large format maps have been created for each district.
- Planning units have been delineated and digitized for each district.
- List of existing planning documents is being compiled.
- Strategies for gathering input from field staff and prioritizing future RMPs are being developed.
- Readily available GIS data is being processed.

**Readily Available GIS Data**

- Inventoried recent RMP maps, and all available DCR and state GIS data layers.
- Considered processing difficulty and project deadline to narrow the final data layer list.
- Developed an efficient process to summarize and assess data layers using Arc GIS Model Builder.
- Data layers will include Ecoregions, wetlands, forest reserves, priority rare species habitat, roads & trails.
  - Example location: Stony Brook Reservation Priority Habitat.

**Next Steps**

- Finish inventorying existing planning documents.
- Implement strategy for gathering input from field staff.
- Finish processing readily available GIS data.
- Compile data into Survey report.
- Develop and apply criteria for prioritizing future planning efforts.

**Criteria for Prioritizing Future RMPs**

- Criteria are being determined.
- DCR enabling legislation - RMPs shall ensure consistency between
  - Recreation.
  - Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources.
  - Sustainable Forest Management.
- Additional factors to consider
  - Upcoming major capital projects.

- Priority management concerns as identified by field staff.
- Significance of property at national level.
- Level of interest and support from stakeholders.
- Any recent management or master plans for the facility?

ii. RMP Approvals, *Jim DiMaio*

i. Southern Berkshire Forest Resource Management Plan

1. Overview was given of the Berkshire Ecoregional Ecological Assessment and Forest Management Framework and Southern Berkshire Forest Resource Management Plan, FRMP.
  2. Gave a power point presentation.
  3. Discussed the assessments, measurable and specific studies. Trying to balance the social, ecological, economic considerations and needs of the forest and publics. There will be some issues that will not be reconcilable due to the public polarization on how public lands should be managed. Below are some additional points discussed on the power point presentation.
    - The plan is based on a 105 year planning period with detailed description of the implementation of the first 15 years of the plan. Looked into a futuristic date for a comprehensive and sustainable forest resource management planning.
    - Landscape ecological assessment of the Berkshire eco-regions outlining the natural resources, trends and evaluations.
    - Developed management guidelines that integrates all natural and cultural resources, activities and uses in a specific and measurable manner. There are three principles in developing the plans, which are conservation, sustainability and ecosystem management.
    - Identified present condition(s), desired condition(s), and management standards and guidelines of state forest road and trails systems, biological resources, recreation areas, water resources, etc. based on public issues, concerns and opportunities.
    - Demonstrated through graphs and pictures sustainable and responsible forest resource management.
    - FRMP emphasizes native species and biodiversity (habitats) including rare species and rare natural communities; riparian and aquatic areas; and diverse species composition, age, and structure.
    - Protect cultural resources.
    - Proposing about 9,708 acres of forest reserves which is about 23%, 533 acres in intensive bacteria, 2,700 acres is non forest, proposing 4,000 acres to be managed in a 150 year rotation and 2,000 acres to be manages in a 105 year rotation.
- In 2095 approximately 60% of the forest will be of older and large trees and 5% in an early successional (young forest) state.
  - FRMP includes climate change considerations including carbon sequestration, managed forests contribution to climate and energy, and adaptive forest strategies to mitigate when possible effect of climate change on forests.
  - The plan is strategic in nature; however the plan has every site nested in this strategic plan with site specific maps, information

about how the forest would be managed. There are legal mandates and are adaptive meaning over time when new information is available DCR will change those plans to suit the situation but it has to have a compelling name and based on science.

ii. Q&A, Southern Berkshire Forest Plan

1. Councilor Natoli asked about the commonwealth's forestry best practices.
  - Jim DiMaio stated in Massachusetts we have the Forest Cutting Practices Act, Endangered Species Act, mandatory Forestry Management Best Practices Act, and Wetlands Protections Act which are mandatory. Mr. DiMaio stated that DCR formally monitors for the federal government best forestry management which are mandatory. Most states do not have mandatory forestry management practices.
2. Whitney mentioned how we are mandated to follow the FFC and if we are managing to FFC standards.
3. Julian said they are pleased especially due to climate change the report is a 105 year sustainability plan. Said there are general concerns on green certifications, general concerns and need to find a way to work together on it but would like to table report so the council and get together and discuss then discuss at next meeting.
4. Commissioner Sullivan said Bob O'Conner from EOEEA will be at next Stewardship Council meeting to discuss green certification, public process and the policies to forestry.
5. Chairman Cross felt that the summary was very difficult to understand, what are the proposal and the recommendations.
6. Councilor Natoli asked about the monitoring system, benchmarks and how do you measure success.
  - Jim DiMaio stated that they do the DCR Bureau conducts annual monitoring, Scientific Certification System (independent auditors) conduct SFC certification annual monitoring, and DCR, DFG and UMass in cooperation with Harvard Forest, TNC, Audubon, etc. have established a Long-term ecological monitoring system which is designed to compare Forest Reserves and Active Forest Management according to the FRMP.

iii. Chairperson Cross tabled the vote on whether to approve the FRMP until additional information is available.

i. Special Business

1. None

IV. Approval of Minutes from February & March 7, 2008

- i. Minutes were approved for February & March

V. Public Comment

- a. **Mr. Bruce Spencer, Forest Hill** – retired DCR Forester and supports the Southern Berkshire Forest Plan.
- b. **Ms. Ellen Moyer** – concerned about several areas of plans, types of logging, clear cuts, lack of enforcements, impacts that can be occurring, lack of public comment, not sure if there is a plan

in process. There needs to be more outreach in general. Worried on impact to DCR, not confident on the science to justify the plan, she is an environmental engineer. Feels to take time on the implementation, public resources are utilized.

- c. **Chris Matera** – feels rates of words mean nothing in regards to logging. Historical level of loggings in 1980, 25 year period it has increased greatly today. There is an 800% increase in logging. In 26 years he feels will be logged which is 4% of the area. Extreme numbers, quote from peer reviewer, feels the lands should not be managed for timber – logging agenda in the report is not good and people will not be happy about that, regeneration cut is about the same as clear cut.
- d. **Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon** – discussed three points.
  - i. Wachusett advisory council meeting discussion on the policies on high ground, a proposal presented to do upgrades to the state police communications system which is a public safety project, these project are allowed in DCR's High Ground policy. Concern mitigation proposed considered to be an adverse impact by the council and by the existing resource management plan for Wachusett Mountain in proposing to replace the power lines up to the top of the mountain, existing RMP calls for alternatives to be considered – hope opportunity to help in the project for RMP, what is the appropriate mitigation for the process.
  - ii. Will there be an update on the ORV enforcement for this year?
  - iii. Forestry what is the appropriate mix. In the summary 1100 acres managed and if 900 acres how is it 1%? Hope for opportunities for public comment. Mentioned October rain forest and view it and see the difference from that forest to the others.
- e. **Mr. Dave Gaffney** – Attorney and has background in ecology and forestry. Not happy with the Southern Berkshire Forest Plan. Doesn't feel rationale makes sense to our densely populated forest.
- f. **Ms. Morris, Nature Conservancy** – A year ago, spoke in person at the TNC meeting and gave written comments on the draft version of the Southern and Northern Berkshire Forest Plan. Recommendations at the time for the Stewardship Council and DCR Commissioner approve these plans and their recommendations have not changed, actually impressed with DCR's response to their comments and DCR's expanded section on the final plan on climate change, and adopted management over time and new detail on the threats in basic plans. The plan has increased and does feel can be written better. Hope that the council votes on the plans today.
- g. **Ray Webber** – Showed four pictures of the forests. Says there was no evasive species in the location cutting were done. Some evasive species in the pools by forest that causing species. Obvious impact, even though there are dead trees but a clear cut of trees not necessary, causes a slope, may help some wildlife but destroys the soil. Winds drops down additional trees due to the clear cutting. Harvesting issue.
- h. **Mr. Page** – Neighbor over the hill, like to know anyone who has been by an oil well, delivered efficiencies do you know that all the fuel used to raise heat, 85 – 90% of all the fuel to use to generate your electricity is in the air is waste heat. Resources discussed are local, in your background. Passed letter to council. He had a cut a tree that was 4" in diameter that grew to 26 inches, just doing maintenance, it is not clear cutting. Feels people need to open their eyes and see we need oil and if trees are dead cutting on a 105 year rotation, why see it stand instead of cutting to use for fuel instead of using oil. Supports plan.
- i. **Ken Lentz, Massachusetts Wood Producers Association** – promotes the forest management on forestry in commonwealth. Feels takes reasonable steps for sustainability, feels there is lack in active management. Feels he needs to remind council to support the timber to support bio-fuel, creates jobs, increase the economic health. There are only 32 mills, when there were 74. Talked about consumption, benefits in the use of logs. State forest can support our rural

communities. There was no management plans prior to Jim DiMaio came on board, hopes all supports plan.

- j. **Robert Collins, Massachusetts Association for Professional Foresters** – prepared write up, passed out to council, recommending approval of the management plans; the committee has reviewed and supports the forestry resource management plan. Gave history in regards to districts and forest reserves. There will be stagnation of forest if there is no management. Feels plans are attainable. Doesn't feel managing 1% of forest is feasible. Only area of disagreement. Feel this FRMP will assure forests for the future generations.
- k. **Mike Leonard, Consultant forester and Town of Petersham Tree Warden** – feels biggest problem in forestry sector is liquidation cutting in private forest land. The liquidation cutting is the cutting of most of high valued trees leaving behind a junk forest. Disagrees with liquidation cutting rules. Discussed USDA inventory for Massachusetts in regards to high value oak versus low value oak. How do we stop liquidating cutting? We need require all forest cutting plans of a good forestry and all forest plans are done by licensed foresters. Disagrees with the Southern Berkshire Forest Plan.
- l. **Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhood** – Inquired why there was a change in the agenda. Prior OHV enforcement was on the agenda then it was removed. He feels this had to do with the request for additional work particularly on enforcement for OHV from other agencies, which is a valuable goal and will give clearer understanding. OHV enforcement report had to additional points that need to be covered. One is education which is mentioned but is not educational and the other issue is noise. Feels the report needs more work and that the committee was not successful in OHV enforcement group, especially in regards to enforcement. Would like to know if more work is being done and what will be the suggestions for enforcement.
  - i. Mentioned tree cutting and the problems of the wood power plants. Feels issue is beyond DCR and should go to Ian Bowles in regards to energy.
  - ii. Discussed parkways and the possible transfer of the parkways but feels there should be a discussion and decision on the parkways. Secretary Bowles have reversed policy now transfer not happening.
- m. **Alexandra Dawsen** – Ask the council to look again at the first two pages of the plan and noted that it seems things are happening on the ground that is not in the plan. Went to a meeting six months ago and inquired what is DCR is going to do in regards to clear cutting. Feels we need to really look at the plans and photos before any decision making and no excuses. Ask for more pictures to be taken and shared.
- n. **John Fellows, Resident of Amherst** – Mentioned the Governor's pledge to bring western, Massachusetts back into the rest of the state and is grateful that Rick Sullivan is the current Commissioner. Reviewed legislation for the purchase for forest lands and he read the legislation to council and stated that it does not mention anything about profits. Looked at the legislation on forest management, doesn't say anything about profit. Feels we need to really look at the plans and photos before deciding to adopt the forest resource management plan. Inquires why using timber clearcutting in Robinson State Park. Gave suggestions on harvest timber management. Void the Stewardship Council Forest contract that advises to clearcut and timber harvest.

VI. **Meeting Schedule** – Next meeting will be Thursday, June 2 Trails side museum.

*Meeting adjourned 3.23 pm*